

# FEBRUARY TIP OF THE MONTH

February means Valentine's day and the time of year to start thinking about spring. Here are some ideas and tips to keep your pets safe and happy:

Valentine's Day usually means chocolate, and chocolate can spell disaster for your pet. As little as one pound of chocolate can kill a twenty pound dog. Smaller dogs can be impaired from lesser amounts. Pets can be easily tempted to eat chocolate within their reach, so owners should place all candy where pets cannot reach it.

If you want to buy a Valentine treat for your pet, check at the local pet stores for treats made especially for your pet.

If Christmas brought you a new puppy, it may be looking for things to gnaw on as it's teeth develop. Instead of it using your furniture, try these tips. Let it gnaw on frozen vegetables, or cold carrots from the fridge. These are not unhealthy if they are eaten and the cold temperature may help soothe any pain from teething. You can also try a frozen washcloth that was wetted before going into the freezer.

As spring approaches and the weather gets warmer, many pet owners will head back to the groomers. Many people let their pets hair coat grow longer in the cold winter months and bring them in for a clip when the temperature warms up. Usually coats get matted and tangled when they are longer and the coat may need to be trimmed very short to get it back in shape.

Spring is also a good time of year to put your pet on a diet if it is overweight. We all love our pets, but sometimes we love them a little too much. If your pet needs to shed a few pounds, the first thing to do is visit your veterinarian and make sure there are no underlying health problems. If your pet is healthy and just pleasingly plump, try weight management with diet and exercise. Cut out treats and table scraps and gradually change to a calorie restricted diet for adult dogs. Mix old food with new less calorie/lite food so there is no stomach upset. Start encouraging more exercise and going on longer walks or jogs.

